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MY COUNTRY.

RUPP.

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WRITTEN BY

ALBERT J. RUPP.

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PREFACE.

The poem which this book contains is published with great reluctance to the author, for it was written at the early age of fifteen and therefore under many difficulties, because he had no education at that time. He knew nothing of grammar, and little of poetry; if these had been firmly fixed in his mind he is positive that it would appear in a different form than it now does.

The poem, when it was first commenced, was intended to contain at least one thousand verses; and to cover a broader space of American history and scenery. But the theme became monotonous and tiresome, and the author felt relieved when he had said enough to bring about a reasonable close. However, it only occupied his attention for about two hours a day, and it was written in the space of a month.

Its faults are numerous and various, and the most simple critic could find something on every page to make ridicule of. But one thing which I meant to show throughout its entire length was the spirit of patriotism, and the power it had on the peace of the country. This is far above slander; a man may denounce a thing no matter how good it is, but patriotism and peace in a country like the United States is loved, admired and cherished.

The English are somewhat set at naught in the first part, but it will be seen that I tried to give the verse the spirit of the times as they were then. Toward the end of the poem I have tried to bring out the thought of reconciliation. I have great respect for the English as a nation, and would be far from denouncing an intelligent and enlightened people.

This is my first effort at book-making, though for a long while I have been requested to put some of the fruits of my mind before the public. Yet circumstances have not favored me with luxury and wealth that I might do so. But riches do not always give an author the greatest popularity; if he is made a writer by birth the talent which is in him will tell in time. I do not want to make myself too forward by putting before the public this poem, and if the words of this book are unworthy to be printed, I would gladly acknowledge them condemned. They were written hastily and thoughtlessly, and I will leave them to be dealt with as the reader chooses.

If I live I hope to put some of my maturer works before the world, nevertheless I must be content at present with this maiden effort.

RUPP.

MAY 6th, 1891.

MY COUNTRY.

I.

Oh, thou loved country ! sacred to my heart,
A silent tongue now bids me write of thee,
For thou art far the grandest, loveliest part,
Of all the Earth's domain that I can see;
Of all the countries, great though they may be,
There is none that can equal such a land,
Where rich and poor alike have liberty ;
The honest laboring man for truth may stand,
Though he be poor, his right he can demand.

II.

Home, where the free and noble love to dwell,
When other lands afford no resting place ;
Thine is the sod which tyrants can not quell,
Or move a blush of shame upon thy face ;
Nor will thy fame of purity erase,
But sways the future with its present might,
Thy record will not, can not, have disgrace
As long as love and liberty shine bright,
As long as Freedom holds on Earth a light.

III.

Where neighbor unto neighbor lives in peace,
And friendship's ties are sealed by mutual love:
May joy and happiness within thy bounds increase,
And help to form thee more like that above ;
And, though to envy nations 'gainst thee move,
They will not make thee from thy good course run,
For thou of many into one art wove ;
And where is the haughty tyrant thee to shun,
Or curse the noble name of Washington.

IV.

Oh, thou great patriot ! in a needy day,
  Thou didst arise to form thy country's birth :
When Slavery with haughty arm did sway,
  Thou liftest her from out her humble worth,
And madest her the greatest land on Earth.
  Of low degree, but noble sires she's sprung,
From weeping bondage into gladsome mirth ;
  And all the world beholds its glory sung,
  And says, Mark how it leads, so wise and yet
    so young.

V.

Oh, thou great heart ! a living freedom's shrine,
  Which power could not lower to slavery ;
Thy works in our minds will ne'er decline,
  How can a good man's deeds loose memory ?
How can the worm, or time, or tyranny
  Debase him in the least from what he was ?
How can the good he did his country die ?
  Hail to the man who loved and cherished laws!
  Who fought twixt life and death for freedom's
    cause !

VI.

Who braved the summer sun's fierce scorching
heat,
Who dared the winter's shivering, blasting cold,
Who sneered against the hand that would defeat,
Nor could his principles be bought by gold :
Oh ! he did bring our nation to a fold,
Unto a sheltered place of habitude,
Now we can look around us and behold,
How great, how grand, our country is—how
good
But ah! 'twas he who led us to this civil mood.

VII.

Long may that flag which flaps to freedom's
breeze,
Exalt his glorious, unforgotten name ;
Long may the land, rejoicing now at ease,
Look to the time when victory's blazing flame,
Under his guidance brighter still became :
And hope fled with the oppressors as they flew,
And faster gained he confidence and fame ;
For even the foe would tremble when they knew
His coming, yet dare not resist his few.

VIII.

Like a poor snake, deep hidden in the grass,
The haughty foe treads o'er his loved domain;
He warns them with his rattles if they pass,
But bids them not disturb him so again ;
Yet, still if they persist he warns in vain,
And quick in the disturber goes his fang,
And gladly they escape with only pain,
But most times death comes with an unwelcome pang ;
So 'gainst his foe with fiery veins he sprang.

IX.

Oh ! dear the patriot blood that there was shed,
Dear were the lives that paid the nation's debt.
A noble worthy fame now marks their bed,
A fame the last that man will e'er forget ;
Nor do their souls in heaven now regret
The good they did their countrymen in dying.
Oh, brave! oh, true! ashamed of work nor swet,
Your empty clay within the coffins lying
Are signs of rest, no more for freedom crying.

X.

Yes, freedom they did gain with toil and strife,
And sealed it with their dauntless crimson blood ;
Each with a willing heart denied his life
And 'gainst the foe for home and country stood;
Who, who can estimate that mighty flood
Of life sap-ebbing to the parent earth ?
Can praise enough be given for all the good
That they did sacrifice for our worth ?
Making through horrors deeds a land of mirth.

XI.

Hark! hearest thou that news borne far and near?
"A war! a war! our country must be free!
Yes, fight we will, and where's the fool to sneer
Against our country's call, or liberty ?
Where is the tyrant that's ashamed to be
Upon the side that stands for what is right ?
Oh! come ye brave, your country needeth thee!
Come, arm to arm and foe to foe unite,
Come for a noble cause your part to fight!"

XII.

The farmer stops his oxen in the field,
And leaves the plow within its furrowed track;
His mind is filled with thoughts his home to shield,
Nor does he in the least for courage lack,
And death or victory only bring him back,
So earnest is the cause which he doth bear.
His arm must help wherever foes attack,
Up, up, an English yoke he can not wear;
He can not see his country in despair.

XIII.

He hurries to his home with tearful eye,
His family there lamenting 'ere he go;
The little ones around their father cry,
And deep affection at the parting show,
And 'round his neck their tender arms they throw,
Then try with soothing words to keep him home.
Ah! in his breast he feels a biting woe,
To know that from his own he now must roam;
And maybe back to them he ne'er will come.

XIV.

"Go, my brave husband," says his wife at last,
"Nor wait while our country is in pain;
We are not slaves, we hold to freedom fast,
And freedom is the cause which we must gain;
And though upon the battle-field thou 'rt slain,
Not for a moment shouldst thou hesitate,
Or let a tyrant o'er our free land reign.
Look thou upon thy bleeding country's state!
Behold, in slavery's chains, how it doth wait!"

XV.

"Go, my brave sons! be liberty your aim,
Greater will be your honor if you fight
And fall upon the field of deathless fame,
Though perishing, yet perishing for right,
Than to have lived a century of delight.
Go! for your home, your country and your God,
And loose the chains that bind you now so tight,
And drive the hypocrite from off our sod,
And with him chase his haughty ruling rod."

XVI.

"And now adieu, one last kiss ere we part,
Be loyal to the flag that is your own;
And prayers that but mother's loving heart
Can raise, will go to God while you are gone:
Oh! she will miss you when she is alone,
And many a tear she'll drop to earth for thee;
And in her sleepless nights she'll sadly moan,
And long and sigh when that blest time shall be
When ye in glory shall return with victory."

XVII.

Ah! many a broken home there was that day,
And many a sorrowful heart, and sad farewell;
Oh! there was weeping for those gone away
That only victory in their hearts could quell;
How many a breast in pain for them did swell,
A mother's love, deep yearning for her son,
And mourning as a tolling funeral bell,
But yearn, thou loved heart, for thy dear one;
His mark will soon be gained, his fighting done.

XVIII.

Then to thy breast he will return again,
  Then joy will pay for sorrows that have passed;
Or should he fall and on the field be slain,
  Within the soil he fought for he'll be placed;
Oh! such a tomb can never be erased,
  But stands a moment for future days,
And when thy name with thee shall be defaced,
  His record still will burn a living blaze;
  And thou with him shall have unfading praise.

XIX.

Oh! thou the ruthless heart who dared to shed
  That noble blood, which from each sincere wound
Flowed to the earth, and with its streams so red,
  Coloring and enrichening the ground;
There yet is heard an agonizing sound,
  The sinking blood cries from its earthen cage,
Oh! with an awful voice it forth does bound;
  And 'gainst the oppressors hard its wrath does wage,
  To curse the time and birth of General Gage.

XX.

Thou rebel red-coat! for thy country's power
To keep us slaves and make her rich and great,
The God of Heaven smote thee from that hour,
And victory for thy cause had to abate ;
And though for Adams' or brave Hancock's state
Thou gav'st no pardon, but avowed their doom,
Yet still within them their hopes did elate,
And brighter did their hearts in freedom bloom;
But thine descended toward thy destined gloom.

XXI.

Oh, thou beloved revered Lexington!
Where the first seven martyrs bravely fell ;
Daring the haughty Briton's sword and gun,
Facing the fire of that tremendous swell.
Alas! the noisy shots their funeral knell,
But roused their countrymen with red-hot veins,
Who pressed toward the place to check the spell;
Avenging their loved brothers' dying pains.
Brisk on the enemy a deadly shower there rains.

XXII.

Oh, thou brave Putnam! dauntless as the oak
That stands upon the mountain's stormiest height;
Where is the man like thee to wear a yoke,
As long as there is strength enough to fight?
Freedom was thy most pure and true delight,
For thou didst hold thy part with a stern will,
And dealt the enemy a dreadful smite;
Thou wast a noble soldier for such skill,
The bravest of the brave at Bunker Hill.

XXIII.

They could not bribe thee, not for rank or wealth,
Their dazzling gold could not entice thine eye;
There was hypocrisy in their sly stealth,
But it could not turn thee to tyranny,
For thou wast bound and joined to Liberty;
Dying with Freedom, should its good cause fail,
Or living where it shed its luxury.
For without it, what good can there avail?
How lives that heart that must for freedom wail?

XXIV.

Those were the days when Liberty did yearn,
When that great goddess bowed her mighty head ;
And in the ashes low she'd sadly mourn,
To see those sons which she with care had bred ;
But with a mighty sound as from the dead,
She rose and cast her sack-cloth garment down,
Then with a loud triumphant voice she said,
"Up, up, nor at thy chains of slavery frown,
For I will lead thee unto great renown!"

XXV.

"Here shall I raise my standard in the air,
Here shall the eagle soar to highest height ;
These, these shall be my sons and daughters fair,
And I will lend to them my sceptered might ;
In this land shall my spirit take delight,
And I will give to them those stripes and stars,
To lead them through with their victorious fight;
Ah! they shall glory in its crimson bars,
For it will guide them on through hardship's wars."

XXVI.

How did the people sigh and long for rest
When miseries like a blight upon them came!
They could not condescend to slavery's breast,
To live in everlasting deathless shame;
Their foe was mighty, and of world-wide fame,
And death glared like a fire in their path,
Ready to swallow with its unquenchable flame;
But stronger hearts than theirs no country hath,
So few to dare a foe of dreadful wrath.

XXVII.

How toiled that little band one wintry day,
Fleeing from that strong enemy that hard did press
Upon them as they made their hasty way;
Faster and faster through the wilderness
They flee, and in their agonizing stern distress,
Washington their brave leader urges on,
And by his words which help to cheer and bless,
He tells them of the time when victory's won,
And they the founders of a mighty Union.

XXVIII.

Oh! many a veteran there can trace his track,
By those blood-stains from freezing wounds that flow;
He bears the painful, bitter, smarting, rack,
He stems the tide of that distressing woe;
He sets his teeth against the coming blow,
And trudges in his weariness along:
Cold comes the north-wind with its sleet and snow,
And sings unto that dreary host a song;
The flesh turns white and blue before its sharpened prong.

XXIX.

Closer and closer comes the fearful chase,
The patriot's forms are cold and poorly clad;
But there must be an end to every race,
Soon will the troubles cease that now rave bad;
Soon will they 'round the fire's blaze be glad,
Soon will they warm their crippled frozen feet,
And every heart will cease to be so sad,
And bitterness will turn again to sweet;
Such are the joys with which they hope to meet.

XXX.

Sometimes they see the pursuers in the rear,
Who push ahead unto their utmost speed ;
They give a loud triumphant cry of cheer,
They are most there, they soon will supercede;
But ah! alas! the veterans also speed,
And soon again they all are lost to view:
With nothing in the road that might impede,
They forward press as hard as those pursue,
And at some cheering word again their strength renew.

XXXI.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" a cry rings from the van,
"We now are saved, we've reached the wished for place;
Let them now try to get us if they can,
But it is done, and ended is the race:
They now can back again their path retrace.
Thou river, thou didst save us from despair,
And from the enemy's unwelcome face:
We now to thee submit our lives and care,
Thou great, grand, never-ceasing Delaware."

XXXII.

They now are all embarked, filled is each boat,
And with a joyful look push off from land;
But see; just as they fairly are afloat,
The British reach too late that yonder strand;
The water now divides them from their hand;
Thanks be to God, he saved them by that stream,
And kept them from the attacking rebel band.
Oh! it was his great might that did redeem
Them in the moment when all lost did seem.

XXXIII.

Thou noble Delaware, for centuries thou hast flowed;
Long did that Red race boast of thy clear tide;
Long hast thou moved within this self-same road;
Smoothly thy current onward yet does glide.
Over much good no doubt thou dost preside,
But this good deed all, all must praise thee for;
And as we now gaze o'er thy bosom wide
And view that yonder, verdant, rising shore,
We think, Is this the stream that stayed the Britian's power?

XXXIV.

Is this the place that in their utmost grief,
They longed to reach when every limb spoke pain?
Is this the tide that gave them such relief?
How long they journeyed, but 'twas not in vain;
They reached the place for which they aimed to gain,
Which served a stronger wall than man could rear,
Keeping the foe from what they would obtain,
And giving the homeless band a sight of cheer.
Here stood those sires, yet to have a peer.

XXXV.

Cold blew the wind that wafted fast its way,
And sent the white snow whirling in the air;
Oh! such a stormy cheerless Christmas day,
A dreary gloom seemed resting everywhere:
But still stern Washington knew no despair,
"Now is the time," said he, "to strike the blow,
With strength and courage, but with watchful care;
To-night amid this storm of sleet and snow
We'll turn the Hessian's gladness into woe."

XXXVI.

He chooses from his lot the truest tried,
And, when the shades of night begin to press,
Again upon the Delaware's rough tide
His little band strikes forth cool, cowardless,
With eye and ear in ever wakefulness,
Amid the dashing ice that threatens fate.
They brave the storm, and through the mass they press;
And though the waters rock so violate,
They can not stop to let the storm abate.

XXXVII.

They reach the other bank in spite of storm,
But how the snow comes whizzing to the ground;
And soon it changes to a sleety form
Hurling its icy darts in myraids 'round;
Full in the face they come with heavy bound,
And sting the life-blood in its natural flow,
Causing a biting bitter hurtful wound.
Oh, such a night to go to meet a foe!
But 'tis the time to strike the unexpected blow.

XXXVIII.

Proud Rall, the leader of the Hessian band,
On Christmas night dropped off his warrior care;
He, and the soldiers under his command,
In drinking wine and riotous mirth share;
Alas! the drunken fools were not aware,
That hard an enemy all night 'gainst them press,
They little thought that Washington would dare
To brave that air filled full of bitterness,
How little knew they of their own distress!

XXXIX.

They little thought that as they drank that wine,
And wished a great success to life and joy,
That therein lurked a serpent that could twine
Around the heart; that could with stealth decoy
The soul, and should the foe annoy,
They knew they would be helpless in their might;
Yet little did their minds on such employ,
"On with your mirth, nor think there will be fight,
For Washington comes not on Christmas night."

XL.

The night drags on, and soon the sun's bright rays,
In all their beauty, slowly steady come;
But hark! a noise is heard in deep amaze,
What is it? list! it soundeth like the drum,
That speaks to them that they have met their doom;
Louder, and louder rings it from afar.
Arouse ye! oh! that stupor, oh! that gloom
That ye were in still down your minds does bar,
And ye not ready, unprepaired for war.

XLI.

Swift goes the heavy charge that wafts sure death,
Too late! too late! thou pleasure-loving one,
The flying troops are yielding fast their breath,
The Americans are pressing hard upon
The Hessians, as dispersed they reckless run,
And Rall receives a painful mortal wound ;
Deep grinds the ball into the flesh and bone,
And staggering falls he hard upon the ground,
And Washington prevails with victory crowned.

XLII.

A noble victory that shines as a star,
Within the heaven's deep and azure blue;
Long may it gleam there, telling forth afar
To other worlds that there are hearts yet true,
And to its own it still reminds anew
Of those old sires, strong in their intent;
Willing to let their blood that land bedew,
Forming a tight and permanent cement,
Making the soil and Freedom one close element.

XLIII.

Oh, thou bright moon, that shin'st in yonder space,
While earth is sleeping silently and still;
How sweetly glows thy radient lovely face,
Warming the heart within, though cold and chill
And frosty is the windless midnight air;
Thy presence has a sight the soul to fill,
A sight that is not met with everywhere,
For in thy queenly look a joy beams bright and fair.

XLIV.

The floating clouds that fringe about thy light,
Serve as a shining vista through the sky,
Leading at last to thy most glorious sight.
How grand the view before the mortal eye
That can behold thee in thy purity!
Oh! is there such a tongue that can express
That sentiment which shines so gloriously?
Can human beings judge thy loveliness?
Or tell of thee more than thou canst impress?

XLV.

So looked that moon upon the wounded dying,
Upon the flowing blood and clotted gore;
Oh! there were sons, for their loved mothers, crying,
And, as they stretched themselves upon that floor,
They called back long gone days of golden yore,
And wished those times would but return again.
Oh! there to pass that endless long night o'er
They groan and sigh amid the oppressing pain,
And long for that which they can not obtain.

XLVI.

Cold is the mother-earth on which they lay,
And as they watch the clouds above them sail,
Or see the moon in brightness far away,
They fancy that the clouds are but the veil
That hides heaven's view from their own eyesight frail;
They deem that the lone whip-poor-will's sad note
Is unto them a humble funeral wail;
Or as its sound seems solemnly to float,
They fancy heaven's music in that throat.

XLVII.

I walk amid the dying and the dead,
Amid the groans of deep oppressing woe:
There yet the blood in purity flows red,
After the battle's hard and fatal blow.
Oh! there are lying both sides, foe and foe,
Enemy and enemy are bearing suffering there:
Hard are the pains the wounded undergo,
Their shrieks and howlings echo in the air;
Or with a manly face 'gainst death they stare.

XLVIII.

"Farewell," I hear a voice say near my feet,
What means it? 'tis a soldiers dying word.
Ah! he is dead. From bitterness to sweet
He's passed, from discord to accord.
His soul now stands before his mighty Lord;
His soulless temple lays there lifeless—dead;
No more to be robbed by the painful sword,
But once for all it takes its destined bed,
Returning back to clay from whence 'twas bred.

XLIX.

I wander on, the frosty air does sting,
And bites the wounds unto their fountain's core;
Oh! hard and horrible that suffering,
Freezing to icy lumps the bloody gore;
How calm the scene where death exhibits power!
How drear the sight! how touching are the moans!
Harder, and harder that strong blight does lower,
And weaker grow those pitiful long groans:
Hard is the heart that weeps not at such tones.

L.

Ah! here and there I see some skulking men,
The enemies of liberty and right.
Oh, my beloved and noble country! when
Will all thy subjects learn that love is might?
Still, every country hath its hypocrite;
The meanest of the mean here may be found;
Cowards amid the hot and raging fight,
But when the battle's din is hushed around,
They skulk about defiling victory's ground.

LI.

They rob the dead, enrichening their store,
They mock the highest cause of liberty;
They love their land, but prize their gold much more.
Ah, said I, villains of obscurity,
Who robs my grave robs my own house of me.
These temples they have given to freedom's shrine.
Why take ye that which not belongs to thee?
Here did they life for liberty resign;
And ye, ye rob their priceless dust divine.

LII.

The night wears on, the field is dumb and dreary,
The shining moon her silvery lustre throws
Over the bloody ground, where worn and weary
The lifeless soldier sleeps, not heeding foes.
Stiff to the earth their senseless forms are froze;
Never to wake again in this career,
Never to feel those overwhelming woes,
Never to drop affection's tender tear,
Never again to have stern hardships interfere.

LIII.

Ah, dreary night! I also feel a sting;
I feel a weary soldier of the day;
My mind betakes to painful suffering,
To see these good and true in their array,
With martial robes all on them as they lay;
Their faces, hands, and clothes bedaubed with
blood;
Great gashes where the sword hath cut its way,
And all around the crimson red hath flowed;
My bosom heaves to see such butchery rude.

LIV.

But barbarous as the slaughtering may be,
They cared not but for home and righteousness ;
They fought to make their loved country free,
And eating all the galls of bitterness,
They bore amid the flood of hardest strife ;
Not to destroy, but to delight and bless
Their native land, and while there yet was life
They still would fight, though doomed to misfortune's knife.

LV.

No Spartan ever fought more free than they ;
They strove, they gained, for home and freedom's cause ;
For liberty they gave their lives away,
Rather than let their land go in death's jaws.
Fly high! thou eagle, 'mid the world's applause,
And pay our countrymen their justice due ;
Fly high, nor be ashamed to own these laws
For which those great and noble veteran few
Fought, till the enemy the yoke withdrew.

LVI.

And now the cannon's voice is hushed and mute,
No more those distant grumblings shake the earth ;
But foe and foe, with willing hand, salute
Each other. All is joy, and life, and mirth ;
No more as in early days, a land of dearth,
But plentiful did it in all increase,
An hundred fold t'has yielded since its birth ;
And independence, right, and might, and peace,
Have lived, and will live, till its day shall cease.

LVII.

How little did Columbus think, that this
Great continent where roamed the savage wild,
Would be the truest spot of earthly bliss ;
The land where the meek humble lowly child
Would lie down with the lion unbeguiled ;
The land where all the hungry poor are fed,
The place where everything is calm and mild.
But ah! 'twould be a land of fear and dread ;
Had not, for freedom's sake, those sires bled.

LVIII.

From where the Atlantic laves her eastern coasts,
To where the Pacific on her western shore
Beats her high waves, and in her dashing boasts,
There is the place where Liberty has power;
There is the land which nations most adore;
A place where milk and honey plentious flows,
For the rich man as well as for the poor.
There nature all her gifts in showers bestows,
And God's great goodness to mankind 'oer-flows.

LIX.

Oh, thou great God! of heaven's highest seat,
The king of kings art thou since time began;
Thy blessings are, in every, way complete
To vain, unprofitable, and wicked man.
Thy strong, omnipotent, almighty power can
Deprive him of both soul and body's might.
Oh! thou canst, in thy all-wise wisdom, scan
From heaven's great and lofty far-seeing height,
And view his years ahead at one brief sight.

LX.

Thou art the God that loves my native land,
  Thou'st kept her under thy protecting arm ;
Thou'st led her on to victory by that hand,
  Which to the enemy proved dreadful harm.
Oh! thou'st protected her amid the storm
  Of life, and kept much evil blight away.
Thy goodness on this land was truly warm.
  In peace, as well as when in great dismay,
  Thou wast her mighty, ever-standing stay.

LXI.

When first the Pilgrim Fathers, in their grief,
  Sought true religion on some earthly clod ;
This place at last gave them the best relief
  To worship, in their way, their loved God ;
Here in this freedom's land their footsteps trod,
  And thou didst hear each humble earthly cry,
And kept them, though the Indian's much-feared
    rod
  Gave them anxiety, and misery :
  They trusted firmly, steadfastly, in Thee.

LXII.

A ruin there at Jamestown marks the spot,
Of an old church with broken crumbled walls,
Thou also wast not in their midst forgot ;
The ivy now around the old stones cralls,
And what is standing, to the heart, recalls
That they did then thy blessed name revere ;
Though desolate and drear its broken halls,
'Tis yet a sight that gives the spirit cheer,
To know those sires loved thy name to fear.

LXIII.

How diligent they prayed that thou wouldst bless
This country, which was loved by every heart;
And thou didst hear their prayers in their distress.
Oh! merciful thou didst to them impart
Thy goodness, which has never failed to flow.
A good and gracious helping God thou art,
On our loved land thou didst bestow
Thy gifts, of kindness, everywhere we go.

LXIV.

Oh! who can name the wondrous things you gave,
Adorning this great land of liberty ?
The dark, cold, endless, depthless Mammoth Cave
Displays a deep sublime curiosity ;
Winding about in dark obscurity,
It sinks into the earth an endless hole ;
Diving into the dread infinity,
It disappears beyond man's sight's control,
And far down under ground its various scenes unroll.

LXV.

But how much different from this picture dark,
Is that wild tract of land where geysers spout?
Lovely and beautiful in Yellowstone's great park,
Madly the water dashes, forces out,
And flings its sprays with deep and grumbling shout.
Into the air it tosses high its arms,
Pure, clear, and lovely, forcibly, and stout,
With all its wondrous deviating charms ;
There nature's constant look expresses storms.

LXVI.

There lie embosomed sputtering boiling lakes,
Filling the heart and mind with dreadful awe;
And the earth all about trembles and shakes,
Obeying nature's true unblended law ;
There seems a fire underneath to gnaw,
Within the bowels of the earth's deep crust,
Grinding its mighty, huge and ponderous, jaw ;
It eats with deathless thirst the sulphurous dust,
And in its quenchless agony for more does lust.

LXVII.

Most every stone peculiar looks contain,
And wild and dismal sights are seen around ;
If ever Hell on earth had a domain,
This surely is the place ; for there abound
Grizzly and ghastly sights, and forms are found
Of rocks that form deep chasms at their base,
Mocking the low and humble neither ground,
And with their hoary heads the sky they trace,
Crowned with the clouds aerial embrace.

LXVIII.

There sheltered valleys sweep in graceful way,
  There awful precipices fall from dismal heights.
The old gigantic rocks embedded lay
  Fast in the natural wall. Oh, wonderous sights!
That fill the heart with horrified delights,
  How grand the scene where sweeps this gulf so drear!
Showing that nature not always excites,
  And helps to charm, and give the spirit cheer;
  But sometimes strikes the soul with paralyzing fear.

LXIX.

Oh! there the water underneath roars on,
  And bites within that deep and callous wall;
There sounds a never-ceasing weary moan,
  That echoes through that long and narrow hall.
From rock to rock the gurgling sound does call,
  And mutters to itself a frightful lay,
As over some rough chasm it does fall;
  Clashing and dashing on its hurried way,
  It flings with heedless arm the weting spray.

LXX.

Unhappy he who falls from that far height,
  The merciless wild stream gives no relief;—
There, there the boiling water sends a fright
  Into vain man—a quivering shaking leaf,
Who knows no more than to be born for grief—
  Here can he look upon the tide of time,
And see comparingly how very brief
  His life is, at the side of these sublime;
  They stand for ages, never past their prime.

LXXI.

Here can small man see all his pomp, and pride,
  And self-esteem, and greatness he does own
Dwindle to nothing, when close by the side
  Of a huge precipice weak and alone.
His lowliness and humanness is shown
  When by the mighty forms, that tower
Their rigid heads up to a colder zone,
  He can not jar or move them with his power.
  Oh! they were born for ages, he but for an
    hour.

LXXII.

His house, his body, is the dust of earth;
That in its destined time decays and dies;
He lives as grass, his death is as his birth.
If saved, his soul with glory to heaven flies;
But cursed is he to whom hell's fire applies:
Uncertain as a quiet sleeping sea,
One moment calm, the next fierce storms arise
And blow with furious breath and energy.
Oh, man! thy life is ever subject to uncertainty.

LXXIII.

But here these stand as monuments of days,
That have passed long before man's time began;
Here did the Almighty's hand these pillars raise,
Because they could not have been raised by man.
Oh! from their heights the mortal eye can scan,
And see upon the earth the hanging clouds;
From mount to mount their airy wings they span,
Dropping their foggy hazy dismal shrouds;
Roiling. the clear air with their numerous crowds.

LXXIV.

How beautiful the western sun sinks down,
To shine upon another foreign shore ;
Over the rocks and hills and mountains brown
He gives one look, as though to rise no more.
How elegant his fiery gleams now pour
Their loving rays, to bid its lass farewell!
It shines! it gleams! and stronger than before!
But ah! the coming night its rays dispell,
And gloom and darkness over all does dwell.

LXXV.

Hushed is the night, while floating vapors rise,
I wander off upon the mountain's brow ;
How blue and spangled are the azure skies
That curve within the heavens like a bow!
I wander on, nor know I where I go,
Until at last I hear a mighty groan ;
Louder and louder the sound seems to grow,
A long and dreary wild and dismal moan,
Sounding and echoing to the rocks alone.

LXXVI.

The night is dark, yet still the moon shines
clear ;
The heavens look bright and glorious every-
where ;
The noise sounds louder as the scene I near ;
So onward, step by step, with utmost care
I walk. I think I tread on stony air ;
I can not see the earth, yet still I go
Over the pathless ground, rugged and bare,
And, 'ere I am aware, I look below
My feet, and view a mighty water's flow.

LXXVII.

I gaze deep down into the dread abyss,
And see a dismal sight, a boiling den
Of mighty currents as they madly hiss
And squirm and struggle but as water can.
Oh, such a sight! I would that my ill pen
Could trace or give it half its justice due ;
But gastlier, drearier yet appears it, when
The moon beneath some cloud hides its fair
view ;
There openly its thoughts in grumblings brew.

LXXVIII.

Leaping from off the high aerial rocks,
It dives into the depths of that deep hole;
And hard against the stubborn stones it knocks
With all its powerful might. How it does roll
With its volumptious tide, that fills the soul
With fear and trembling, as over the brink
The mortal eye does look at its control;
And see the diving water downward sink,
A mighty sheet of that pure harmless drink!

LXXIX.

The air is filled with its loud ceaseless groan,
But how it dashes madly fiercely down!
A young Niagara art thou Yellowstone,
But can I liken thee to its renown?
Still, in the Rockies mighty costly crown,
Thou art the richest pearl which it contains;
Thou art the purest gem of these hills brown;
Blessed are the rocks that own these loved domains:
They boast the most that boast of thy pure strains.

LXXX.

Oh, Yellowstone! sweet Yellowstone! to me
  Thou art a charm that in my soul sinks far ;
A thousand years thou'st flowed in gaiety,
  A thousand years thy currents strove in war :
Long has thy thundering jar worn deep this scar,
  This chasm in the heart of these bleak hills ;
Thou art the laughing joy that does unbar
  The stillness, and the solitude, and fills
  The heart awhile with deep amazing thrills.

LXXXI.

Oh, land of wondrous sights! I think I'm filled
  With all the knowledge that I know of thee,
And yet the soul may wander and be thrilled
  A thousand years before it all can see ;
And then, alas! its just begun to be
  Acquainted with the simplest of its works.
Oh, Nature! thou art one great mystery ;
  Well from thy endless scenes this weak clay shirks,
  For none knoweth it but God who in it lurks.

LXXXII.

Deep is the well whence Nature draws her stores;
Yea, deeper than the breadthless realm of space;
In her is all the wealth of God's great powers,
She speaks His handy work in every place;
And well it shows its mighty Maker's face,
And gladly does it own him God of all:—
See how those towering peaks the sky embrace,
As if in prayer they constantly would call;
Behold their humble lowliness though they be tall.

LXXXIII.

See how those slender pines look up to heaven;
What can I see that does not praise his name?
Lo! everything is through His mercy given,
And why should they not their Creator claim?
And how much more should man, who has the flame
Of that enlightening spark within his breast,
Make all his daily paths of surer aim,
To him who long has nourished and caressed,
Who man in his own likeness hath impressed?

LXXXIV.

But I must wander from thee Yellowstone,
And view the Mississippi where he flows.
Ah! here 'tis different, no deep grumblings groan;
But all goes quiet in a still repose;
Gently the current downward slowly goes,
Making its way toward the ocean's tide;
There, with a mighty mouth, at last he throws
A large volumptuous swell, both deep and wide,
Into the Gulf of Mexico's north side.

LXXXV.

Here was the home of Indian sons and daughters,
And well they honored thee, thou river great;
For they have called thee "Father of the Waters,"
A name that's surely worthy of thy state;
For our land would all be desolate
And dreary, hadst those never found this road;
Reaching with thy long arms to penetrate
Far inland, there thou dost receive thy load
And joining all in one, a nobler stream ne'er flowed.

LXXXVI.

Ah! all these sights but speak to me one thing,
And though they smile, or frown, how ere they be;
A word from every action seems to spring,
And that word which it says is Liberty.
How thrilling in my heart is it to me,
To know that everything loves Freedom's right!
No! nothing is there that mine eyes can see
That in this privilege does not take delight;
But everything partakes the rural sight.

LXXXVII

The flying eagle, or the straying bird,
May brook itself to death within the cage;
And life becomes to them a thing absurd,
To try the golden bars which mock their rage;
In vain they watch, in vain they do engage
To burst the prison wall which holds them fast;
There all alone, a dreary hermitage
They live, being constantly o'ercast
With sorrow as their dreary life rolls past.

LXXXVIII.

So would it be with this land were it locked
To slavery, in ruthless prison bars;
Those irons, which for ages they have mocked,
Would be resisted by ennoble wars;
But, were they forced to wear the clamping scars,
The race in pining for its rights would die
Rather than live where tribulation mars:
Being parted from affection's loving tie,
Then none but fools in ignorance for life would sigh.

LXXXIX.

Oh, Liberty! sweet Liberty! thy shrine,
Shall in this land rise to a mightier pile;
For thou wast given to us a thing divine,
And worthy to be kept from all defilé;
All thy true sons will never thee beguile;
But they will hold thee sacred, by their birth,
Protecting thee from all intruders vile.
Yes! they have meant to make their parent earth
A place where thou dost most delight in mirth.

XC.

And where is there a land that has more scenes
  Than thou, my own beloved United States;
At viewing thee my soul a harvest gleans,
  My mind, in but rude words, at most, translates
All that my heart knows of thy great estates;
  And yet of thee its just begun to know.
Here opens Nature wide her glorious gates,
  And gives vain man a sight at all her show,
  And shouts to him, "On! on!" and bids him farther go.

XCI.

Behold the mighty lake, Superior;
  A lovely sea, an inland ocean small;
Nor is it for its size inferior
  To many others that they lakes would call;
Here is a sight extreme poetical,
  To look away as far as eye can see;
Or watch the waves, sweet, pretty, musical;
  Dancing along the shore in gaiety,
  Or beating hard with endless energy.

XCII.

But there are many other lovely lakes,
Not only thou Superior dost excel,
Dotting the land all over. How it makes
A sight more picturesque than pen can tell,
Shining as mirrors that from heaven fell;
Sweet is the harmony they do express,
Embosomed snugly where they love to dwell:
The fanning zephyrs over them caress,
And they send forth an ever charming loveliness.

XCIII.

Oh! my beloved Onondaga's sheet,
Thou art the prettiest that mine eyes can view;
To me thou'st been a thing sublime, yet sweet,
With thee I love to hold my interview;
For, from thy sight, my poor soul ever drew
The doings of another nature's sphere;
Thy lovely scenes before me come anew
The more I look. To thee my love's sincere:
Thy blessed sight I ever shall revere.

XCIV.

I love with raptured heart thy woods and hills,
I love to stand upon thy beach and gaze
Across thy bosom. How my whole heart thrills!
I watch and look, and still in deep amaze
Inspiring thoughts within my bosom blaze.
There is a lovliness that fills my soul,
Untill I think I'm carried back to days
When earth was all a dream, and could unroll
Sights that were far beyond man's mind's control.

XCV.

Oh, thou wast made and shaped for Liberty,
I see it sparkling in thy shining face,
I view it everywhere my soul would be,
Speaking with that sweet tongue which is its grace:
It bears the marks of freedom every place;
Nor is't at all ashamed its cause to own,
And though, in years gone by, the present race
Were all extinguished, and their law o'erthrown,
Yet still it would praise the cause of its glorious renown.

XCVI.

Dear country, all these scenes enlight my heart,
When I behold thou art such a land;
Where nature gushes forth in every art,
And for man's special uses does expand.
Oh! everywhere I see a mighty hand,
That writes SUCCESS upon the rock of time;
There will those letters large and glorious stand,
An ensign to the people as they climb
The hill of life, and heed that word sublime.

XCVII.

Oh, Freedom! to thy cause my bosom twines,
Thou the most noble order man can know;
Blest is he who unto thy arm reclines
His life, his strength, and all he can bestow.
All, all are debtors unto thee, they owe
Their civil right, their might in deeds and words:—
There thou art loved the most where peace does show
Its mightiness; being bound with thy strong cords
Which break not at the strokes of ten, ten-thousand swords.

XCVIII.

I boast of thee, dear land, because I feel
Thy presence in my sight a burning fire;
And to delight my soul, I often steel
From thee a living coal to me inspire.
Thee, and thy noble sons, I must admire;
For when with eyes half-closed I backward gaze,
And see the deeds they did, my mouldering lyre
Would sound abroad their never-dying praise;
Would waft from shore to shore the glory of their days.

XCIX.

Though weak, while all their enemies were strong,
Though all their enemies were rich while they were poor;
Yet right will always supersede the wrong,
And weakness oft defies the mightiest power.
Yes, they were gallant heroes, when each hour
Was looked on as the last of Freedom's hold;
Yet still they plead with Freedom at her door,
And offered up themselves, those true hearts bold,
A ransom more than earth could pay in gold.

C.

Now would I sing their praise while they are gone,
No more will they return to save the land;
Their souls are unto blessed peace withdrawn,
No more is fighting seen on every hand.
Oh, ye dead heroes! still that twining band,
Of sweet affection, which ye gently bound
Among your countrymen, within this land,
Twines now on every true heart close around;
And makes the theme more dear, and hallows
victory's ground.

CI.

Now the bold Briton, or the haughty Turk,
Can look upon this land in wonderment;
They both learned that it is not small work
To harm that of the newer continent;
Yes, Britain, thou hast learned to be content;
And found Americans could also fight,
For thee they were an ample element;
They taught thy greedy raving appetite
To leave alone the soil of freedom's right.

CII.

Dear Country, I must cease, but 'ere I close
There is yet one, whose deed I must admire.
Though over him proud fame has ne'er arose,
Yet for his sake again I'll strike my lyre:
A nobler life than his could ne'er expire;
Oh! he was true, unflinching till the last.
To do his country good was his desire,
And in his noble deed he was steadfast;
He braved death's stern and dark and gloomy blast.

CIII.

And when the British hard upon them pressed,
And when their little brig was all subdued;
A longing thought he muttered in his breast,
That he might save the flag, that yet hung rude
Upon a mast that still unbroken stood;
And when the crew abandoned her with fear,
He, with heroic energetic blood,
Climbed high the mast, and clasped the flag so dear,
And leapt into the water with a cheer.

CIV.

Then swam for land, with all his strength and
might,
Still holding fast the flag he loved so well;
He struggled with the waves—a dreadful fight—
But they prevailed, and bore him 'neath their
swell;
Yet still he clasped the prize whate'er befell.
Oh! noble was the heart that braved death so;
Him Death with all its horrors could not quell;
Rather he chose to perish, though in woe,
Than to have reached the land without his flag
to show.

CV.

Next day upon the beach he lifeless lay,
Still clasping hard the prize for which he died;
A noble funeral shroud, for worthy clay.
Oh! honor unto him who there denied
His youthful life, who sought no pleasure's pride,
But sought a humble way some good to do.
He loved his country whate'er would betide;
His was the heart deceitfulness ne'er knew;
He was a hero, steadfast, firm, and true.

CVI.

Oh! honor to thee, Hancock, though thy name
Is long forgotten with the tide of years;
Yet still, I love to praise forgotten fame.
Oh! that I could but shed for thee some tears!
My heart in deepest sympathy reveres
Thy name, for it will never die in me;
And, when that flag I see it oft appears,
When flapping 'round the pole of liberty,
To be embracing fondly gently thee.

CVII.

Farewell, my land, thy name in me shalt be
A living fire, that can have no end;
Thou art the spot for lovely harmony.
Oh! may thy people never thy aim blend
With foul wickedness, or which may tend
To prove a curse to every earth's domain:
But if they do, oh! then will come thy end;
And bitter will that end be, for the chain
Of slavery unmercifully will o'er thee reign.

CVIII.

Come Holy Spirit, blessed God, and Son;
And on this land thy heavenly blessings pour;
Be merciful to this loved Union,
And help thy sons to ever thee adore:
Come, send that freshening balm from shore to shore,
And help their souls to ever turn to thee.
Oh! do thou teach them now and evermore,
To have within their hearts true piety,
And peace, and love, and joy, and liberty.

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